



UNITED STATES SENATOR · MICHIGAN
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U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow Speaks Out Against Republican Prescription Drug Plan

WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), coordinator of the Senate Prescription Drug Task force, spoke out today against the prescription drug plan offered by the Republican leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives. Because the plan proposed by the House GOP leaves a large gap in prescription drug coverage and still requires seniors to pay the majority of their prescription costs, Stabenow remains staunchly in favor of the Senate bill proposed last week by Senators Bob Graham (D-FL) and Zell Miller (D-GA).

“We all recognize that skyrocketing prescription drug prices have forced too many of America’s seniors to make tough spending choices. As coordinator of the Senate Prescription Drug Task Force, I have been working with my colleagues for a comprehensive Medicare prescription drug benefit that can offer them some immediate relief,” said Stabenow. “Unfortunately, the plan announced today by Republicans in the House provides seniors with little more than unfulfilled promises. It promises help, but delivers large gaps in coverage and premiums that will still leave many seniors struggling to afford the medications they so desperately need. In the end, their plan would have the effect of denying any coverage for the average senior’s prescription drug costs for anywhere from three to six months of the year.”

The plan announced today by House Republicans fails America’s seniors in a number of ways. It delivers no guarantees, only a suggested outline that allows private insurers to set premium levels and design the coverage they may wish to offer. In addition, their flawed plan has large gaps in proposed coverage. No coverage is offered to seniors spending from \$2,000 to \$3,700.

“This plan offers seniors who have already spent \$2,000 on their prescription drugs the privilege of paying a \$35 a month to receive no assistance whatsoever. That is simply outrageous. Our Congress can do better than that. When Medicare was created in 1965, it offered Americans the promise of quality, affordable healthcare. Unless we modernize Medicare to cover prescription drugs—without holding seniors hostage to high premiums and ridiculous gaps in coverage—we are not keeping that promise,” said Stabenow.

The Graham-Miller plan offered last week in the Senate would add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare for the first time. Its key components include:

- No deductible, so coverage kicks in with the first prescription filled
- A guaranteed monthly premium of no more than \$25
- Co-payments of \$10 for generics, \$40 for medically necessary brand-name drugs
- Free prescriptions for the neediest of seniors. There is no premium or copayment for the roughly 12 million seniors who earn less than \$11,900 a year.